

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

### **LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (cancelled):
2. (currently amended): A game mastery support apparatus which supports mastery of an executable ~~multi-step~~ multi-stage game, the game mastery support apparatus comprising:
  - a distribution device which distributes mastery information, which advises a player how to master a game, to a terminal apparatus having a game execution function for executing the executable multi-stage game independent of said mastery information,
  - wherein the distribution device distributes the mastery information according to mastery status information, which is obtained from the terminal apparatus and indicates a stage among said multiple stages of the executable multi-stage game to which a player has proceeded.
3. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the mastery status information from the terminal apparatus includes flag information indicating a stage of the game to which the player has proceeded.
4. (currently amended): A game mastery support apparatus which supports mastery of an executable ~~multi-step~~ multi-stage game, the game mastery support apparatus comprising:
  - a distribution device which distributes mastery information, which advises a player how to master a game, to a terminal apparatus having a game execution function for executing the executable multi-stage game independent of said mastery information, and
  - a ranking information distribution device which distributes ranking information pertaining to a rank of a player in the game,
  - wherein said mastery information is distributed on the basis of the ranking of a player.
5. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

a ranking information distribution device which distributes ranking information pertaining to a rank of a player in the game.

6. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising:

a ranking information distribution device which distributes ranking information pertaining to a rank of a player in the game.

7. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the ranking information distribution device includes:

an accumulator which accumulates the mastery status information from the terminal apparatus for each player's identifier;

a determining device which determines a rank of a corresponding user with reference to the accumulated mastery status information; and

a distributor which distributes ranking information pertaining to the determined rank.

8. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the ranking information distribution device includes:

an accumulator which accumulates the mastery status information from the terminal apparatus for each player's identifier;

a determining device which determines a rank of a corresponding user with reference to the accumulated mastery status information; and

a distributor which distributes ranking information pertaining to the determined rank.

9. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the ranking information distribution device includes:

an accumulator which accumulates the mastery status information from the terminal apparatus for each player's identifier;

a determining device which determines a rank of a corresponding user with reference to the accumulated mastery status information; and

a distributor which distributes ranking information pertaining to the determined rank.

10. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the terminal apparatus comprises a first terminal device having a game execution function, and a second terminal device displaying received mastery information within a display area thereof, wherein the game mastery support apparatus further comprises:

a receiver which receives, from the first terminal device, mastery status information representing a game stage to be mastered; and

a distributing device which distributes, to the second terminal device specified as a destination, the mastery information and the ranking information according to the mastery status information from the first terminal device.

11. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the terminal apparatus comprises a first terminal device having a game execution function, and a second terminal device displaying received mastery information within a display area thereof, wherein the game mastery support apparatus further comprises:

a receiver which receives, from the first terminal device, mastery status information representing a game stage to be mastered; and

a distributing device which distributes, to the second terminal device specified as a destination, the mastery information and the ranking information according to the mastery status information from the first terminal device.

12. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the terminal apparatus comprises a first terminal device having a game execution function, and a second terminal device displaying received mastery information within a display area thereof, wherein the game mastery support apparatus further comprises:

a receiver which receives, from the first terminal device, mastery status information representing a game stage to be mastered; and

a distributing device which distributes, to the second terminal device specified as a destination, the mastery information and the ranking information according to the mastery status information from the first terminal device.

13. (previously presented): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the terminal apparatus is a portable device.

14. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the first terminal apparatus and the second terminal apparatus are portable devices.

15. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the first terminal apparatus and the second terminal apparatus are portable devices.

16. (original): The game mastery support apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the first terminal apparatus and the second terminal apparatus are portable devices.

17. (previously presented): A terminal apparatus which receives information distributed by a game mastery support apparatus for supporting mastery of an executable multi stage game, and which has a game execution function, the terminal apparatus comprising:

a display screen; and

a processing section which receives, from the game mastery support apparatus, distributed mastery information, which advises a player how to master an executable multi-stage game according to the particular stage of multiple stages then being executed, said execution being conducted independent of said mastery information, and which displays the mastery information on the display screen.

18. (previously presented): A terminal apparatus which receives information distributed by a game mastery support apparatus for supporting mastery of an executable multi stage game, and which has a game execution function, the terminal apparatus comprising:

a display screen; and

a processing section which receives, from the game mastery support apparatus, distributed mastery information, which advises a player how to master an executable multi-stage game according to the particular stage of multiple stages then being executed, said execution being conducted independent of said mastery information, and which displays the mastery information on the display screen,

wherein the processing section receives, from the game mastery support apparatus, distributed ranking information pertaining to a rank of a player in the game, and which displays the ranking information on the display screen.

19. (original): The terminal apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising:

a first terminal device which has the game execution function, and which sends, to the game mastery support apparatus, mastery status information representing a game stage to be mastered; and

a second terminal device which receives information distributed by the game mastery support apparatus, and which is specified as a destination of the mastery information,

wherein the second terminal device includes:

the display screen, and

the processing section receiving, from the game mastery support apparatus, the mastery information for mastering the game, and displaying the mastery information on the display screen.

20. (original): The terminal apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the processing section receives, from the game mastery support apparatus, distributed ranking information pertaining to a rank of a player in the game, and which displays the ranking information on the display screen.

21. (original): The terminal apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the terminal apparatus is a portable device.

22. (original): The terminal apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the first terminal apparatus and the second terminal apparatus are portable devices.

23. (previously presented): A computer readable medium having recorded thereon a processing program for activating a game mastery support apparatus for supporting mastery of an executable multi-stage game, the processing program comprising:

a distributing routine for distributing mastery information, which advises a player how to master an executable multi-stage game, to a terminal apparatus having a game execution function, said function being executable independent of said mastery information,

wherein said function being executable in stages and said mastery information being distributed on a stage-by-stage basis.

24. (previously presented): A method for distributing, via a communications network, game mastery information, which advises a player how to master a game, from a game mastery support apparatus to a terminal apparatus having a game execution function in accordance with a request from the terminal apparatus, said function being executable independent of said mastery information, the method comprising the steps of:

storing, in the terminal apparatus, user information items including a game title, mastery information flag pertaining to a game stage to be mastered, a user identifier, and personal user information;

transmitting the user information items to the game mastery support apparatus;

causing a processing section of the game mastery support apparatus to retrieve mastery information corresponding to the received game title and mastery information flag from a mastery information table of the game mastery support apparatus;

storing the received mastery information flag as mastery status information to a mastery status management table of the game mastery support apparatus on a per-user-identifier basis;

causing the processing section of the game mastery support apparatus to retrieve the game information items corresponding to the received game title from a game title data base group of the game master support apparatus;

causing the processing section to store the received personal user information as customer information database;

determining a rank of a corresponding user with reference to the stored mastery status information; and

distributing, to the terminal apparatus, mastery information corresponding to mastery status information on the game stage to be mastered, and the determined user rank information.

25. (original): The method according to claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

distributing rarity added value information from the game mastery support apparatus to the terminal apparatus of a higher-ranked user; and

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storing a mastery status information distribution history in the game mastery support apparatus on a per-user basis, thereby customizing a delivery status for each user.